THE

CAUSE

OF

THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

PLEADED.

1560/1645 (2.)

THE

CAUSE

OF

THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

PLEADED,

IN

AN ADDRESS

TO

The Proteſtants of Ireland.

BY THE REV. JOHN NASSAU.

A day, an hour, of virtuous Liberty
Is worth a whole eternity in bondage.

CATO.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY H. FITZPATRICK,

FOR J. MOORE, 45, COLLEGE-GREEN.

M DCC XCII.

THE

CAUSE

OF

The Roman Catholics

PLEADED, &c.

THE Legiſlature of this kingdom has now decided upon the claims of the Roman Catholics.——Whilſt, on the one hand, it has made them new, and important conceſſions; on the other, it has judged proper to reject, for the preſent, their juſt deſire of being admitted to ſome participation of the rights of citizens.—However, even this rejection, is ſo tempered, by the motives from which it proceeded, that it may juſtly be conſidered, rather as a temporary delay, than as an abſolute, or peremptory refuſal.——Each diſtinguiſhed Senator has

expreſſed the ſincere wiſh, the well-founded hope, that the day will come, when the inhabitants of this iſland ſhall at length form one people, whoſe intereſts ſhall be blended together, and who ſhall all be equally concerned in the ſupport, and defence of their excellent conſtitution.

For a ſhort time, we had reaſon to apprehend, that religious animoſity and rancour would be again revived. That eagerneſs, that impetuoſity, which is ſo natural to the human heart, in the purſuit of any object, on the one ſide; thoſe ſtill exiſting prejudices, that lively tenacious ſenſe of intereſt, on the other, threatened the peace, and tranquillity of this iſland; and the dire effects of civil diſcord began already to be felt.

Moſt happily, the warmth and zeal of party ſeem now to have ſubſided: and, Reaſon and Reflection have reaſumed their empire.—Catholics appear now to be ſenſible that, in their upright, and laudable exertions to obtain a partial emancipation, they, in ſome ſmall degree, loſt ſight of that political moderation which is ſo very requiſite, but ſo difficult to maintain, in the diſcuſſion of momentous queſtions.—Proteſtants ſeem now diſpoſed to admit, that thoſe claims are founded on principles of natural juſtice, which they at firſt aſcribed to the madneſs

madneſs of ambition.——On the whole, the Catholic Cauſe has gained ſignal advantages from this diſcuſſion. Every impartial, every enlightened man, now acknowledges that Freedom ought to be reſtored to Roman Catholics, as ſoon as the diſpoſitions of men ſhall be ſufficiently prepared for ſuch an event. To accelerate that happy period, by every poſſible means, ſhould be the wiſh and honeſt ambition of each individual. It is this noble motive which has prompted me to exert my humble talents in pleading the cauſe of the Roman Catholics of Ireland.—It is my ſincere wiſh, and it ſhall be my earneſt endeavour to treat the ſubject I have undertaken, with becoming temperance, candour, and impartiality. To irritate the feelings of men is far indeed, removed from my object.—My ſincere deſire is, to conciliate men to each other, and to promote that ſpirit of general benevolence, which is the choiceſt gift of Heaven.

In the following ſheets, I ſhall endeavour to eſtabliſh, in the cleareſt manner, the juſtice and reaſonableneſs of the claims of the Roman Catholic Body. It will be my particular object to prove, that theſe claims may be *gradually* complied with, without the leaſt danger to the intereſts or rights of Proteſtants, in Church or State.—But, before I enter into

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theſe two principal objects of the preſent performance, it may not be foreign to our purpoſe, to remark the cauſe, to which the preſent ſpirit of the Roman Catholics of Ireland ought to be aſcribed; neither will it be improper, if we take a curſory, impartial view of the conduct of Roman Catholics, during the late agitation of their intereſts.

In reviewing the hiſtory of mankind, it has ever been the amuſing occupation of the philoſopher, to contemplate thoſe cauſes, which have gradually prepared the minds of men, for thoſe great revolutions, which, in ſucceeding ages, have rapidly followed one another. To an obſerving mind, it is not difficult to trace the various and powerful cauſes, that are ſo intimately connected with that general revolution, which has ſo lately taken place in the ſentiments of mankind. I call it a general revolution; for, though it has not yet openly diſplayed itſelf in every part of Europe, nothing more than the favourable occaſion is watched for; and, whenever the moment arrives, we ſhall behold that generous ardour for Freedom, which already animates every breaſt, break out into action, with redoubled and irreſiſtible vigour.

The ſtandard of Liberty was firſt erected on the American coaſt. Stimulated by the noble example,

example, this country was roused to a sense of her wrongs: and, at the command of the tutelar Genius of Ireland, legions of patriotic soldiers instantly sprang up, as it were from the ground, and vindicated the rights of their long injured county. Since that period, we have beheld the inhabitants of Holland, of the Austrian Netherlands, and of the Principality of Liege, unsheath the sword in the cause of Liberty—We have seen a patriotic king of Poland, leading the way to constitutional Freedom—and, at this moment, the attention of the Universe is engaged in contemplating the efforts of France, to settle and secure her lately acquired liberties.—Such are the great events which already so eminently distinguish the present æra; and could we look forward into futurity, we should probably discover, at no distant period, the Idol of Despotism, every where falling prostrate before the altar of Liberty. The general dispositions of the age seem to justify the conjecture. The spirit of Freedom, though repressed by the sword in the Netherlands, and in Liege, is far from being subdued. In sullen silence, those countries pore over their real, or supposed wrongs; and, as soon as the prospect of success shall disclose itself to view, they appear ready to try once more the chance of war. The enchanting voice of Liberty has been listened to with rapture in many States of Germany; and the ardent love

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of Freedom ſeems now to be diffuſed throughout every part of Europe.

Can it then, for a ſingle moment, be a ſubject of aſtoniſhment, that in this general enthuſiaſm for Liberty, the Roman Catholics, forming three-fourths of the population of this kingdom, ſhould wiſh to enjoy the rights of citizens, in a country, which boaſts of its Liberties, and glories in its Conſtitution.—Ireland is the native ſoil of Liberty; no wonder then, that the love of Freedom ſhould be innate in the breaſt of every Iriſhman. At the time this country refuſed longer to bend to the yoke of oppreſſion, Catholics were the aſſociates, and the partners of Proteſtants in arms. It was then that the love of Liberty glowed in every heart; and, is it to be ſuppoſed, that the Catholic alone was incapable of cheriſhing a ſpark of that pure, that ſacred flame, which was enkindled by the breath of Heaven? and yet, natural as the preſent diſpoſitions of Catholics muſt appear to every impartial, and reaſonable man, the humble hope and deſire of being *gradually* admitted to the full enjoyment of freedom, has, in this Country, been ſtigmatized as ſeditious, and tending to ſubvert the conſtitution.

An accuſation of this moment, challenges our attention, and demands inveſtigation. In order

order therefore, that we may be enabled to paſs an equitable judgment on the juſtice, or injuſtice of this accuſation, it is neceſſary we ſhould examine what the conduct of Catholics has been, during the late tranſactions. For, though their claims ſhould be evidently proved to be founded on the ſtricteſt equity; yet, if in their endeavours to attain the recovery of their Rights, Catholics had made uſe of illegal and unconſtitutional means, they would, in that caſe, have drawn upon themſelves the juſt imputation of ſedition. On this ground, a rapid view of their late proceedings may be proper, that ſo it may appear, that their conduct, as well as their claims, merits not the opprobrious name of faction.

In November laſt, a ſmall number of Catholic citizens of this metropolis, formed themſelves into a Society. They were a ſelf-conſtituted body, in no manner whatſoever repreſenting the Catholics of this kingdom. Theſe gentlemen, animated by the laudable deſire of advancing, as much as might be in their power, the relief of their Catholic brethren, publiſhed a paper entitled——"A Declaration of the Catholic Society." This Declaration had not yet long appeared, when, on the 17th of December, the General Committee of Catholics, the *real* repreſentatives of their brethren throughout this kingdom, were called upon by ſome diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed members, to join them in an Addreſs to the Throne; as the ſpirit of this Addreſs apparently reflected upon the conduct of a few individuals, a great majority of the Committee, judging they were nowiſe authoriſed to paſs cenſure upon their fellow-ſubjects, refuſed to unite in the Addreſs. However, to prevent every miſconſtruction of this refuſal, they declared their readineſs to renew their declarations of loyalty to the king, attachment to the conſtitution, and obedience to the laws, whenever the legiſlature ſhould require it. A few days after this event, the minority of the Committee, in conjunction with a great number of Catholic gentlemen of diſtinguiſhed characters, and poſſeſſed of great landed property, preſented that Addreſs to the Throne, which had been rejected by the Committee. This conduct was ſoon after condemned by a great part of the Roman Catholic body, who have thought that the wiſhes of the great majority of their repreſentatives in the Committee, ought to have been liſtened to. This difference in opinion, has been the fatal cauſe of that diviſion which immediately took place.

It is impoſſible for me to determine, and it is totally foreign from my preſent ſubject to examine, which of theſe two parties had reaſon on their ſide. Both had the ſame noble object in view—to obtain from the benevolence of the

the Legiſlature, for themſelves and their brethren, ſome further relaxations of the Penal Laws; but moſt unfortunately, to attain this deſirable end, they purſued different paths. I ſhall not, as I have already ſaid, touch upon this delicate ſubject: diſcuſſions of this nature, ſo far from conducing to any one good purpoſe, tend only to widen the breach, and to perpetuate the rage of Diſcord. Could my voice be heard, with what energy would I not entreat and conjure my Catholic brethren, to lay aſide all diſſentions, to forget that which now cannot be retrieved, to join once more hand in hand, and proſecute with united efforts their common intereſts. How very painful it is to compare the dire effects of vehement paſſions, with that ſublimity of conduct, obſerved by the Catholics of this iſland during ſo many paſt years. They walked together in angelic harmony and peace, and attracted the admiration of their Proteſtant brethren. But alas! this pleaſing picture has vaniſhed, at leaſt for the moment: how muſt their enemies, if they have any, exult in this diviſion! and on the other hand, how ſeverely muſt the affectionate feelings of their friends be wounded!

But to return to our ſubject.—As ſoon as the ſentiments of the Catholic inhabitants of this capital, and of many other parts of the kingdom, tending to approve the conduct of their General

General Committee, had been collected, the members met, unanimouſly adopted, and ordered to be printed a long ſtring of Reſolutions, which accordingly made their appearance in all the public papers. The adoption of theſe Reſolutions being the only public meaſure which the Committee had taken, previous to the introduction of the Catholic Bill, and as their nature in a great degree, gave occaſion to the imputations laid to the charge of the Roman Catholics, it is neceſſary we ſhould examine them with the moſt ſcrupulous attention. But firſt, I muſt beg leave to ſay a word reſpecting the meetings held by Roman Catholics in different parts of Ireland; for theſe alſo, were included in the general charge of ſedition, alledged againſt the Catholic Body. It is moſt devoutly to be wiſhed, that each Proteſtant would judge for himſelf, and not ſuffer his own judgment to be led away by idle clamours. Let any unprejudiced man peruſe, with the moſt ſcrutinizing attention, all the Proceedings and Reſolutions of the Catholic meetings, and I am very certain his impartiality will induce him to acknowledge, that there is not in the whole of their tranſactions, a ſingle iota to be found, that has the leaſt affinity to ſedition, or menaces of parliament: on the contrary, he will find in many of their Reſolutions, the ſtrongeſt declarations of loyalty to our Sovereign,

reign, and eternal attachment to the Conſtitution.

In regard to the Reſolutions publiſhed by the the Catholic Committee of this city*, it appears to me they may very properly be divided into two claſſes. The entire object of the firſt, is a condemnation of Lord Kenmare's Addreſs: this cenſure is founded on the ſuppoſition, that the addreſs obliquely reflected upon the conduct of the Catholic Committee. The ſecond, and much more important part, upon examination will be found to include—1ſt, a Declaration of the right of the Roman Catholics to petition the Legiſlature; and 2dly—a Declaration of the chief grievance under which they labour, together with the Reſolution of preſenting an humble and dutiful Addreſs to Parliament, praying that this grievance may be alleviated or finally done away.

Now, what can be deſcried in the whole tenor of theſe Reſolutions, that deſerves to be ſtigmatized as ſeditious, and menacing Parliament?—The cenſure contained in the firſt part of the Reſolutions, is a matter of mere internal policy, intereſting only to Roman Catholics, and nowiſe connected with the ſubject of debate

* See Reſolutions of the General Committee of Roman Catholics, on the 15th January, 1792.

debate between Proteſtants and Catholics.—In the ſecond part, we find, in the firſt place, a Declaration of the right of petitioning: this right is now ſo univerſally known and acknowledged, that it would be idle in me to vindicate its exiſtence. A right of petitioning the King, or either Houſe of Parliament, for the redreſs of grievances, appertains to every individual, and is one of thoſe, which in the Engliſh law is termed—a right of perſons. Entreaties and prayers are the privilege of thoſe who are in diſtreſs: ſternly to command ſilence to the afflicted, denotes the intoxication of deſpotiſm. It might be tolerated in the tyrants of Rome, but in a free Conſtitution, the State will always liſten to the humble entreaties of the ſuppliant.

The remaining part of the Reſolutions contains a declaration of the chief grievance of the Roman Catholics. To ſhew the reality of this heavy grievance, will be a principal object of this performance, it is therefore unneceſſary to make any remarks here on that head. There is, however, one Reſolution which perhaps, the Committee did not ſufficiently weigh; for had they conſidered the conſtruction it was ſuſceptible of, I am perſuaded they would have modified it.

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The Reſolution I allude to is as follows:

" Reſolved, That a proper mode be adopted to call the " attention of Parliament to the grievances of the Roman " Catholics, and to *point out the meaſure and extent to which* " *it is expedient, and neceſſary* to relieve them from the re- " ſtrictions and diſqualifications under which they labour."

But this inadvertence, as well as any other that the Catholic Committee may have been betrayed into, has been ſufficiently atoned for, by the ſubmiſſive language of their late Petition to the Legiſlature, and likewiſe by the Addreſs, which they not long ſince made to their Proteſtant brethren, the language of which is humility itſelf—Hear their words:

" By the fulleſt tribute of our gratitude, we will ſhew, " that we receive every conceſſion, as flowing from the free, " unconſtrained benignity of Parliament, and of our Sove- " reign. We conſider ourſelves as ſtanding at once in the " judgment, and in the mercy of Parliament. That great " tribunal of general legiſlation will judge upon the merits " of our caſe, and treat with a deſerved contempt, as cap- " tious and futile, all objections which go, not to the " *ſubſtance*, but to the *mode* and *manner* of our application. " It will pardon our *errors*, and conſider our wants. When " it knows our deſires, it will freely give what it is proper " for us to obtain, neither more nor leſs."*

Where is the perſon capable of reflection, who will not be ſatisfied by ſuch unequivocal proofs of moderation and ſubmiſſion?

Another

* Addreſs from the Catholic Committee to their Proteſtant fellow-ſubjects, page 27.

Another matter of reproach, urged againſt the Roman Catholics, is—that they have publiſhed a great number of incendiary writings, tending to inflame the minds of the lower orders of the people. The truth is, that from the time the intereſts of Catholics became the common topic of converſation, until the bill in their favour was brought into Parliament, not a ſingle pamphlet appeared, the performance of a Roman Catholic, excepting that of Dr. M'Kenna. So very devoid of all foundation is the charge, of induſtriouſly propagating ſeditious pamphlets, that for my part, I muſt acknowledge I was much ſurpriſed, and even ſecretly mortified, convinced as I was of the eminent abilities of many Catholics, even within the ſmall circle of my acquaintance, not to find a ſingle Roman Catholic ſtep forward to plead the cauſe of his brethren.

Such has been the language, and ſuch the conduct of the General Catholic Committee, and their adherents throughout the kingdom. What is there then in their whole proceedings, that deſerves to be branded as ſeditious and menacing the Legiſlature?—To menace Parliament is undoubtedly a crime of the greateſt magnitude; and if any Roman Catholics had been guilty of ſuch treaſonable miſdemeanors, it was a duty which the Senate owed to its own dignity, and to the ſecurity of the State, to

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bring the criminals to condign puniſhment. But the charge was no more than a groundleſs accuſation, propagated to raiſe the tide of popular fury againſt the Catholic body.

Having taken this ſhort retroſpect of the conduct of Roman Catholics; the juſtice of their claims, next demands our ſerious conſideration.

It has been a ſubject of ſurpriſe to many, that Roman Catholics ſhould be ſo raſh, ſo preſumptuous, as even to conceive the fond wiſh of participating in the advantages of our free Conſtitution: even now, they ſcarcely ſeem recovered from their aſtoniſhment—theſe men ſurely, are little converſant with the human heart. The firſt Emperor of Rome, whoſe reſtleſs ambition, not ſatiated with trampling on the rights and liberties of his Country, ſtill meditated new plans of conqueſt over unknown kingdoms and unexplored regions; this tyrant, I ſay, ſeems to have been better acquainted with the ſecret ſprings of the human mind. He proclaims aloud, that the admiration and the love of Liberty are natural to all mankind, and that the condition of ſlavery muſt neceſſarily be odious to them:—

Omnes autem homines natura libertati ſtudent, et conditionem ſervitutis odiunt.

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We have indeed been told, that we are not ſlaves, becauſe we have the free exerciſe of our religion, and are protected by the laws of this country, in the enjoyment of our perſons, and property. If the word *ſlave*, be taken in its ſtrict ſenſe, correſponding to the term, *ſervus*, or *manicipium*, in Juſtinian's code, certainly we are not ſlaves; but, does it follow from thence, that we are freemen, according to the acceptation of our Engliſh conſtitutional language? A Spaniard is not a ſlave, in the ſtrict and abſolute ſenſe of the word; and yet, will any Engliſhman, or Iriſhman ſay that a Spaniard is a freeman?—The Negro ſlave, though after his arrival in England, he is not freed from any right which his maſter may have acquired to his perpetual ſervice, nevertheleſs the inſtant he lands in England, he is protected in the enjoyment of his perſon and his property, and ſo far becomes a freeman; and yet, no man will ſay that he is a freeman, according to the uſual acceptation of the word among Engliſhmen. The truth is, that as there are different gradations of freedom, ſo there are various degrees of ſlavery.—And here, let it be allowed me to aſk my Proteſtant brethren—would they really think themſelves free, if the Roman Catholics filled every branch of the Legiſlature, if they were decorated with every dignity and honor of the ſtate, and poſſeſſed all the offices and magiſtracies of the country; whilſt they,

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the Proteſtants, remained exactly in the ſame ſituation, in which the Catholics are at this day—would they, I ſay, really think themſelves free? The breaſt of a Proteſtant ſwells with indignation at the mere ſuppoſition—he would think ſuch a condition the baſeſt ſervitude: How then can it expected, that the Roman Catholics, forming two thirds of the population of this country, ſhould imagine themſelves free in that ſituation, which, to the other third of the community, would appear an intolerable ſlavery!

In order to be free, the people muſt compoſe at leaſt one branch of the Legiſlature; and whenever the great body of the people have not their repreſentatives in the Legiſlature, they are in a ſtate, in which they are continually liable to be oppreſſed.——"In a free ſtate," ſays Sir William Blackſtone, "every man who is ſuppoſed "a free agent, ought to be, in ſome meaſure, "his own governor, and therefore a branch, "at leaſt, of the legiſlative power ſhould reſide "in the *whole* body of the people."* And certainly, it is repugnant to reaſon, it is prepoſterous to aſſert, that a people can be free, or enjoy ſecure happineſs for any uninterrupted length of time under a government, where their property is taxed, and laws made to bind

* Blackſtone's Commentaries, Book I. Chap. II.

their conduct, by men who are their *maſters*, and not their *repreſentatives*. Proteſtants will forgive the ſeeming harſhneſs of the expreſſion, for ſuch they are in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word; for thoſe are moſt undoubtedly our maſters, who can command us, without ever being in the leaſt accountable to us for their conduct.

Is it not owing to the Catholics not having a due weight in Parliament, that this unhappy country was for ſuch a length of time the ſeat of Ignorance, of Poverty, and of Wretchedneſs? From this ſame cauſe, proceeded that ſanguinary code of laws, at the view of which, human nature ſtarts back with horror. An ancient *Pagan* State provided no puniſhment for the crime of parricide, judging that ſo impious and unnatural a crime could not be perpetrated by the hand of man—*The Moſaic Law* denounced the ſentence of death, againſt the wretch, who ſhould raiſe his hand againſt his parent—But here, in a chriſtian country, the refined cruelty of our laws armed the ſon with a dagger to ſtab his father's peace for ever, to inflict a wound, a thouſand times more cruel than that which could be given by the bloody hand of a baſe aſſaſſin—Laws were deviſed to eradicate the nobleſt feelings of human nature, to fill thoſe breaſts with helliſh diſcord, whom God had firſt connected by every tender and endearing

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tie. But, let us turn from the ſhocking ſpectacle—let us weep over thoſe exceſſes into which our anceſtors were hurried by fatal prejudices—let us caſt a veil over all that has paſt—but, let us at the ſame time, draw a ſalutary leſſon from the errors of our miſguided progenitors—let us provide for the future ſecurity and happineſs of the Roman Catholics—And how can this be effected, but by gradually adopting them, and making them members of the Conſtitution? I am not afraid that the late odious code will ever be again revived—No—It is impoſſible for one inſtant to ſuppoſe it. Blind prejudices and a falſe policy inſtituted thoſe laws, which the enlightened wiſdom and liberality of the preſent generation have aboliſhed for ever. What is it then I am apprehenſive of? I fear all thoſe evils and inconveniencies, which are incidental to every form of government, where the people have no ſhare in the legiſlative power of the country. Under the moſt abſolute monarchy, the people may, and often do enjoy real happineſs under the government of a good and wiſe king; and yet, a free-born Iriſhman, far from thinking ſuch a precarious ſtate eligible, is ready to expend his fortune, to ſacrifice his life in defence of thoſe liberties, the ineſtimable value of which, he is ſo well acquainted with. The ſentiments of Catholics reſpecting the various forms of government muſt be the ſame as thoſe of their fellow ſubjects. Three millions

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of men have no ſhare in the Legiſlature of the country, and therefore they cannot but be ſenſible they are in a defenceleſs ſtate, expoſed to every oppreſſion, that falſe policy may at any time dictate to their governors.

The confined limits of a pamphlet will not allow it; otherwiſe, I could adduce inſtances in which Catholic intereſts have been materially injured, even ſince the partial repeal of the penal ſtatutes; but I ſhall not dwell on this topic. I hope I have ſufficiently evinced that the Roman Catholics, not having any right of franchiſe, elective or repreſentative, in the Conſtitution, labour under a real and heavy grievance; and that they are in conſequence fully juſtified in ſeeking redreſs, by every dutiful, ſubmiſſive and legal method.

But this is not all. The Roman Catholics in this kingdom, are not only cut off from the rights of a free Conſtitution, but their condition is alſo in many eſſential points much inferior to that of ſubjects who live under an abſolute government. In the moſt arbitrary State, brilliant talents, adorned by merit, ſeldom fail to raiſe a man to diſtinction and honor. A ſovereign, or at leaſt his miniſter, generally knows how to appreciate, and reward uſeful and ſplendid abilities. But in this country, the Roman Catholics by one general ſentence, are branded

branded with diſhonour, and condemned to everlaſting infamy; for, what greater indignity can be offered—what more cruel puniſhment can be deviſed, than to declare a whole people for ever incapable of ſerving their country, even in the meaneſt capacity? The divine Author of our exiſtence has implanted in every heart, the love of our native country, and a warm deſire of promoting her intereſts. He has endowed the human mind with admirable powers; and that thoſe powers may not lie dormant, but be impelled to active vigour, he has impreſſed on our diſpoſitions, a principle of action, a noble emulation, a becoming ſenſe of dignity. Is it not then contrary to the ordinances of Heaven, contrary to the voice of Nature, to condemn three millions of men as wretches unworthy of ſerving their country? Talk not then to a Catholic of his Freedom: It is an inſult to his underſtanding: he knows, he ſeverely feels that he is by the laws of his country, ſentenced to the moſt degrading ſervitude; doomed for ever to a torpid impotence; condemned to ſpend his life in ignoble ſilence—

—Veluti pecora, quæ natura prona atque ventri obedientia finxit.

Such then is the melancholy ſituation of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, they enjoy not the

the rights of a free State, and they are precluded even from the advantages of an arbitrary government.

Many Proteſtants will indeed readily admit, that the excluſion of Roman Catholics from the bleſſings of our Conſtitution, is really a ſevere hardſhip; but nevertheleſs, they endeavour to defend and juſtify this oppreſſion of their fellow-ſubjects, by motives grounded on policy and neceſſity. The fallacy however, of ſuch arguments muſt, prima facie, appear evident; for no ſufficient cauſe can be alledged, that will convince mankind that two-thirds of the community ought to be abſolutely governed by the remaining part of the nation: yet, ſo inconſiſtent are often the reaſonings of men, when their own private intereſts are at ſtake, that this great diſparity of numbers has, even in the Senate, been pleaded as a powerful argument againſt the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Were ſuch a maxim in the art of Government once eſtabliſhed, it would ſanction the arbitrary ſway of any ariſtocracy, and would inveſt the Tyrant with a new title to rivet the fetters of his ſubjects, leſt the conſciouſneſs of their numbers might inſpire them with the hope of freedom. This mode of reaſoning is too much connected with the weak and inhuman policy of the Egyptians:—"Behold "the people of the children of Iſrael are "numerous,

" numerous, and ſtronger than we. Come,
" let us wiſely oppreſs them."

We will now proceed to an inveſtigation of thoſe motives, which influence the generality of Proteſtants, in the oppoſition which they give to the admiſſion of the Catholics to the rights of our Conſtitution—Such is the magnanimous generoſity of Iriſh Proteſtants, that very few individuals in this nation are to be found, who would for an inſtant heſitate moſt cordially to embrace their Catholic brethren, and admit them to a participation of every right, could they once be entirely convinced that this adoption might be effected, without danger to the intereſts and rights of Proteſtants, and without riſk to the Conſtitution of Ireland. It appears to me, that all the different apprehenſions of our Proteſtant brethren may be conſidered under two heads. In the firſt place—their fears originate from prejudices, deeply impreſſed in their minds againſt Catholic principles—principles, which they have been taught, even in the earlieſt ſpring of life, to regard as wholly inimical to, and ſubverſive of a free Conſtitution. In the ſecond place—their apprehenſions proceed from a ſuppoſition, that if the Catholics were once poſſeſſed of power, they might be led by ambition to exclude the Proteſtants, in their turn, from any ſhare in the Legiſlature, and that intoxicated by their ſucceſs, they might even

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be induced madly to lay claim to the eſtates of their anceſtors.

Let us firſt endeavour to diſpel thoſe vain and groundleſs fears, which are occaſioned by a whole hoſt of religious prejudices. But, before I enter on this point, I ſhall premiſe an obſervation upon the ſubject of toleration in general. Certain Catholic countries have been greatly reproached by Proteſtants, for their ſpirit of perſecution; but let me obſerve, that Intolerance in thoſe States might be much more eaſily juſtified from motives of policy, than the ſame ſpirit could be excuſed in England, or Ireland. In theſe kingdoms the eſtabliſhed religion was Catholic: the attempt therefore to extort from men, a declaration that thoſe doctrines were erroneous, which they had received from their anceſtors, and which they had always conſidered as ſacred and divine, could only be dictated by the blind zeal of perſecution. In Spain and Portugal, the ſituation of things was widely different. No religion but the Catholic was known in thoſe two kingdoms; human policy would therefore naturally lead the Sovereign to oppoſe the introduction of new doctrines, the promulgation of which would probably be attended with tumults and diviſions, that might at length eaſily bring on all the horrors of civil war. Theſe are exactly the ſentiments of Preſident Monteſquieu, a writer, whom

whom I believe, no Proteſtant ever accuſed of bigotry or illiberality of ſentiment. "The fol-
"lowing," ſays this Author, "ought to be
"conſidered as a fundamental principle in
"matters of religion—Whenever it is in the
"power of the Magiſtrate to receive or reject a
"new religion, its eſtabliſhment ſhould not be
"permitted; but if it is once eſtabliſhed, it
"muſt neceſſarily be tolerated."* The opinion of Mr. Hume, ſeems to be decidedly the ſame on this ſubject. The very firſt argument alledged by Mr. Gibbon, in that part of his celebrated Work, where he endeavours to extenuate the cruelty of the perſecutions, carried on by Roman Tyrants againſt the Primitive Church, were it admitted to have any weight, would form an apology for that ſpirit of intolerance, which directed the councils of Spain and Portugal.† No one, I hope, will hence imagine, that I

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* Ce ſera une très-bonne Loi civile, lorſque L'Etat eſt ſatisfait de la religion déja établie, de ne point ſouffrir l'établiſſement d'une autre.——Voici donc le principe fondamental en fait de religion. Quand on eſt maitre de recevoir dans un Etat une nouvelle religion, ou de ne la pas recevoir, il ne faut pas l'y établir: quand elle y eſt établie, il faut la tolerer.

L'Eſprit des Loix, Liv. xxv. Chap. x.

† See Mr. Gibbon's Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. II. Chap. xvi. Pages 319 and 320. Dublin Edit.

am an advocate for the terrors of an Inquiſition: I abhor every kind of perſecution in Spain and Portugal, as well as in England and Ireland. All I contend for is, that Intolerance might, in a political light, be more eaſily excuſed in thoſe countries, than in theſe. According to the *exiſting* laws of Ireland, every Proteſtant who is reconciled to the Church of Rome, incurs the penalty of *premunire;* and in the act paſſed in the ſeventeenth and eighteenth of the preſent reign, in favour of Roman Catholics, it is declared, that no benefit of the ſaid act is to extend to any perſon, being a Proteſtant, who ſhall at any time become a Catholic. How then with conſiſtency can an Iriſh Proteſtant venture to cenſure the intolerance of thoſe countries, where no other religion is known but the Catholic?

Having made theſe remarks on the ſubject of toleration, we will now go on to an examination of Catholic principles—Here, I feel myſelf humbled beyond all expreſſion, when I reflect that I muſt ſtoop ſo low as to enter into an apology for my Religion! How long will this iſland be the aſylum of every prejudice! At a time when the tenets of Catholics are ſo univerſally known, and ſo univerſally underſtood, is it poſſible that Iriſh Proteſtants ſhould ſtill believe, ſhould ſtill cheriſh an opinion

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that Catholicity maintains Doctrines dangerous to Society, and inimical to a free Government! Why do not Iriſh Proteſtants, in a queſtion ſo highly intereſting in this country, take the pains to acquire information? Let them conſult every college, every univerſity in France, in Germany, in Spain, in Portugal, and in every other country: the Doctrines of theſe univerſities are public, are known to the whole univerſe. In *this* country, the Roman Catholics have taken the moſt ſolemn oath,* they have called the Almighty, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt to witneſs, that they abjure that unchriſtian and impious principle—that no Faith is to be kept with Heretics—They have declared that they in no manner believe that the Pope, or any other foreign Prince, Prelate or State, hath or ought to have any temporal or civil juriſdiction, power or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly within this realm—they have ſworn that it is their firm belief, that neither the Pope, nor any other perſon or perſons, can abſolve them from any part of their Oath of allegiance—what more can be required from Catholics? I perceive I am warm, but my Proteſtant brethren will eaſily forgive this honeſt warmth, when they reflect how cruelly the feelings of a Roman Catholic muſt be hurt, when

* See the Oath taken by the Roman Catholics, and alſo their late Declaration.

when he hears his Religion ſtigmatized with ſuch horrid imputations.

I was moſt truly rejoiced to find that the Catholic Committee of this city, had added to their late Addreſs to the Public, the queries propoſed by the Gentlemen of the Engliſh Catholic Committee, at the deſire of Mr. Pitt, to foreign univerſities, together with the anſwers given. I am perſuaded that ſuch authentic teſtimonies muſt conduce greatly to diſpel the dark cloud of prejudices; and on this account, I ſhall ſubjoin to this performance the ſame queries, with the anſwers of ſome of the univerſities, being very deſirous theſe documents ſhould become as public as poſſible. The anſwer of the ancient and celebrated univerſity of Louvain, particularly gratified me: the Profeſſors diſcover an honeſt indignation, that *ſuch queſtions, at the end of the eighteenth century, ſhould be propoſed to any learned body of men.* I myſelf purſued for ſeveral years, a courſe of ſtudies at Doway and Louvain, and am well perſuaded that had any ſuch Doctrines as are imputed to Catholics in *this* country, been advanced by any profeſſor, he would have been judged to be in a ſtate of inſanity, both by the univerſity and the civil government; and indeed, ſo much ſo by government, that probably he would have been deemed a fit object for confinement.

I could

I could wiſh that the Engliſh Catholic Committee had alſo propoſed their queries to the univerſity of Coimbra; for, as Portugal is generally imagined ſtill to be the ſeat of the moſt credulous ſuperſtition, and the blindeſt bigotry, a deciſion from that country, conformable to the anſwers of the other univerſities, muſt have convinced the moſt prejudiced man, that no ſuch tenets are held by *any* Catholics, as are aſcribed to them. Now, that the ſentiments of Coimbra would have coincided with thoſe, of every other Catholic univerſity, I will take upon myſelf to aſſert, and to evince that I am founded in this opinion, I ſhall here preſent the reader with a ſhort extract from the ſtatutes of that univerſity.* "The profeſſor "of church hiſtory ſhall ever be careful to draw "the exact line of diſtinction between the na- "ture and the objects of the two Supreme "Powers, the ſpiritual and the temporal.—His "moſt anxious endeavours muſt be exerted not "to confound the rights of one with thoſe of "the other; that ſo he may neither attribute "any ſpiritual juriſdiction to the Sovereign, "nor inveſt the Pope, or biſhops with *any tem-* "*poral or civil power*.—The profeſſor ſhall alſo "carefully inculcate the juſt authority which "the Sovereigns of this realm were at all times "poſſeſſed

* Eſtatutos da Univerſidade de Coimbra. Tom. II. titulo IV. cap. II.

" poſſeſſed of, reſpecting matters of a *mixed* " *nature*; reſpecting the *external policy* of the " church, and the *external adminiſtration* of " ſpiritual rights." Such are the principles, that ſerve as a guide to the profeſſors of Coimbra, the tendency of which muſt be eaſily perceived by thoſe who are verſed in canon law. I could give ſeveral extracts equally deciſive, but the above appears to me fully ſufficient. Theſe ſentiments are nowiſe confined to Coimbra, but are diffuſed throughout the kingdom. I have now before me, a printed Latin theſis, which was ſuſtained in the city of Oporto, in the public halls, about eighteen months ſince. The warmeſt advocate for the privileges of the Gallican church, would I believe allow, that ſeveral of the propoſitions, contained in this theſis, ſufficiently curtail the Pope's prerogatives.*

In regard to the power of the ſovereign Pontiff, I ſhall here only add, that thoſe natural and powerful

* The following are propoſitions extracted from this theſis: " Gratis fingitur *inerrantiæ* donum Petro, et ejus ſucceſſori- " bus collatum.—Itaque errare poſſunt ſucceſſores Petri in " rebus fidei et morum, adhuc, ut dicitur, loquentes ex " cathedra.—Epiſcopus Romanus directé vel indirectè nil " poteſt in temporalia Regum, nec totius Eccleſiæ nomine.— " Epiſcopi Romani *Decretales Conſtitutiones* indigent ſum- " morum imperantium *Regio Placito*, ut in eorum Ditionibus " promulgenter, publicitate gaudeant, acceptentur, et vim " legis obtineant."

powerful cauſes, which gradually raiſed the Papal ſee to the moſt ſplendid aggrandizement, and the moſt boundleſs authoriy, muſt be well well known by every individual, who has even a ſuperficial knowledge of modern hiſtory; and with equal facility may thoſe cauſes be obſerved which have now annihilated all Papal influence in civil concerns, and will for ever confine the Pope's juriſdiction to matters that are merely ſpiritual. To judge from the preſent aſpect of things, there is much greater reaſon to fear that the Civil Power may attempt to uſurp the ſpiritual rights of the Church, than that *ſhe* will encroach on the temporal juriſdiction, or authority of any ſovereign.——I muſt own I was not a litte amuſed, with hearing ſome of our moſt diſtinguiſhed ſenators, ſeriouſly endeavouring to convince the country gentlemen, that this iſland has nothing to dread from papal terrors.—Alas! So little does his Holineſs think of depoſing Kings, and Emperors, that he would eſteem himſelf more than happy, if he could by entreaties and prayers, retain peaceable poſſeſſion of thoſe territories which he received from his predeceſſors.

Thus it appears, that principles inimical to the rights of civil government, have no exiſtence among Catholics; and as for the Pope's interference in concerns of any civil or political nature, we have juſt as much reaſon to tremble

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at his authority, as we ſhould have at any impotent invaſion of our Rights from the Biſhops of Liege, Cologne or Treves.

The real Doctrines maintained by the Catholic Church, if viewed in a political light, will appear at leaſt harmleſs and inoffenſive. The principal tenets in which we differ from our neighbours of the Eſtabliſhed Church, may, I think, be comprehended under the following points:—We believe the divine inſtitution of Seven Sacraments—we hold that the Pope is the Head of the Church, and that to him, in this quality, belongs a ſupremacy of honor, ſpiritual authority and juriſdiction, in the univerſal Catholic Church—we think the invocation of ſaints beneficial—we pay a certain ſhare of veneration to their Relics—we reſpect the images of Chriſt, thoſe of the Apoſtles and of other Saints—we believe the exiſtence of a middle ſtate, called Purgatory—we admit that the Church has the power of remitting thoſe temporal puniſhments, which according to the Catholic Doctrine, often remain due to the divine juſtice, after the guilt of ſin has been remitted—we think it uſeful to obſerve days of abſtinence and faſtings. Such are the chief tenets, in which our faith differs from that of Proteſtants. In theſe nothing is to be found, that can awaken

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the fears of men, or give umbrage to the civil power.*

We have now taken a ſufficient view of the principles and doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion; nothing in them can be deſcried that is repugnant to a free government. Nevertheleſs, the fears of Proteſtants are ſtill alarmed; they tremble at the very idea of Roman Catholics becoming members of the Conſtitution; they imagine that in proceſs of time, the Proteſtants would be excluded from the Legiſlature, and that this country would once more behold a CATHOLIC PARLIAMENT. Thoſe men who argue thus, do not recollect that we are now neither in the ſixteenth nor ſeventeenth century, but are advancing quick towards the cloſe of the eighteenth. The moſt rapid, aſtoniſhing and general revolution that can poſſibly be conceived, has taken place in the ſentiments of mankind, within the courſe of

* In the manuſcript of this pamphlet, I had entered into a ſhort expoſition of thoſe tenets in which we differ from Proteſtants, and particularly, reſpecting the nature of ſacramental abſolution; but, as the Catholic Committee, ſince that time, has publiſhed their Declaration of Catholic Doctrines, I have judged that part of my work ſuperfluous. The adoption of the late Declaration is a meaſure which reflects the higheſt honor on our Committee; and it has already been productive of infinite ſervice, in diſpelling the prejudices of our Proteſtant brethren.

the preſent age. In fact, that raging ſpirit of perſecution and intolerance, which from the riſe of the Reformation, till the commencement of the preſent century, equally diſgraced every nation, and every ſect, this ſpirit, I ſay, did not originate from any principle of religion. The precepts of the meek and humble Jeſus, breathe nothing but ſweetneſs and gentleneſs—the Evangelical law is founded on benevolence—the ſublime doctrine of chriſtianity was calculated to convince and engage the human heart, by the ſuperiority of its evidence, and the beauty of its precepts; it was never meant that it ſhould extort aſſent, by violence and force. It is to the paſſions of men, to their intereſted views, to their bigotry and to their ignorance, that we are to impute all thoſe horrors of perſecution, which ſtain the hiſtoric page of every country.

Mankind, at length wearied with perſecuting one another, by experience convinced of the folly, and injuſtice of their conduct, have, as it were by common conſent, thrown down their arms.—They fly to the embraces of each other, they weep with mingled tears over the errors of the paſt, and enter into an eternal compact of benevolence, and friendſhip. Reaſon has at length triumphed over Prejudice; and the ſplendid trophies of her victory are erected in evey region.—America, Germany, France, Poland,

Poland, already experience the benign wiſdom of her laws—her conqueſts advance with incredible rapidity in every country, and ſoon ſhall her empire be acknowledged by the entire univerſe—Yes, ſoon ſhall human policy ceaſe to make diſtinction between Proteſtants, and Catholics. Even in this iſland, liberality of ſentiment has already ſo far gained ground among all deſcriptions of men, that no danger to the rights and intereſts of Proteſtants, can be juſtly apprehended from the gradual and progreſſive admiſſion of the Roman Catholics to the benefits of our Conſtitution.

We have lately heard much of Proteſtant Aſcendancy. The firſt time I ſaw the term uſed, I endeavoured to affix ſome determinate meaning to it: the only idea which the word, as uſed by ſome, conveyed to me was ſuch, as could not poſſibly be reconciled with that ſtate of things which muſt ſoon take place in Ireland. For this reaſon, with no ſmall ſhare of diſappointment did I peruſe the Anſwer of an illuſtrious Senator, to the Addreſs preſented to him by the Corporation of this city: I was aſtoniſhed to hear him ſpeak of ſupporting a Proteſtant Aſcendancy. Convinced as I was of his enlightened and comprehenſive underſtanding, I knew that ſuch narrow principles of policy could not be the dictates of his judgment; I began to fear he had not the fortitude

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to oppoſe the tide of popular prejudices. The heroic courage of Mirabeau, on a ſimilar occaſion, inſtantly occurred to my mind. That renowned patriot had propoſed and carried a meaſure, which for a moment, was extremely obnoxious to the people—thouſands of the populace inſtantly ſurrounded the National Aſſembly, and the horrid cry of *Mirabeau à la lanterne!* was ſhouted out on every ſide; how did that great man conduct himſelf at that critical moment? He flew to the roſtrum of the Senate, and there, with intrepid fortitude, he declared aloud, that he would never flatter or deceive the people, in any thing contrary to the true intereſts of his country; he well knew how ſhort the diſtance was from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock, but he fully confided, that poſterity would do him that juſtice, which the prejudices of his cotemporaries might poſſibly deny him—ſuch was the parallel which naturally preſented itſelf to my mind.—But, Mr. Grattan, my precipitate judgment wronged you, and it is with exultation I now acknowledge it. At that time it was nowiſe eſſential, it would even have been inexpedient to declare the whole extent of your opinion; you reſerved, Sir, the manifeſtation of your ſentiments till a more uſeful and a more glorious occaſion. Never, ſhall the remembrance of that night be eraſed from my mind, when I beheld you riſe in a moſt crowded Senate, and with

with undaunted firmneſs, announce to the Repreſentatives of the Nation, the maxims of real policy, and the dictates of eternal juſtice. With thoſe powers of eloquence, which nothing could reſiſt, you combated the ſubterfuges of intereſt, and diſpelled the darkneſs of prejudices. The eyes of Europe were fixed upon you, during this important diſcuſſion; and you have juſtified thoſe elevated notions, which were entertained of your abilities, and of your virtues. To you, Sir, this country is indebted for her riſing commerce—To you ſhe owes the freedom ſhe enjoys—And, from your exertions ſhall gradually proceed that perfect union of all her inhabitants, from which alone can ariſe the greatneſs and power of this iſland. Future ages ſhall ſtyle you the Father of their country, and the Founder of the State.—Already much has been effected, you have ſhewn the immorality of the preſent ſyſtem; you have proved the evident impoſſibility of long maintaining it. The ſubject has been now diſcuſſed, and you have prepared the minds of men for that event, which according to the uſual courſe of human things, muſt ſoon take place, as a natural and neceſſary conſequence:

> Who does the beſt his circumſtance allows,
> Does well, acts nobly; ANGELS could no more.

This, Sir, is not the language of adulation; it is a homage due to ſuperior virtue.—

But

But to return to our ſubject.—It has been alledged as a powerful objection againſt the admiſſion of Catholics to all the rights of citizens, that a ſudden tranſition of power is always attended with danger to the State. No perſon living will be more ready than I am, to ſubſcribe to the truth of this argument; it is incontrovertible; and it is no more than a juſtice due to the Roman Catholics of this kingdom to ſay, they were the firſt to prove how much their minds are impreſſed with the force of this political maxim. For this reaſon, did they deſire nothing more, for the preſent, than the right of voting in counties *only*, for *Proteſtant* members of parliament;* in ſuch a manner, however, as that a Catholic freeholder ſhould not vote, unleſs he either rented, and cultivated a farm of twenty pounds *per ann.* in addition to his forty-ſhilling freehold, or elſe poſſeſſed a freehold to the amount of twenty pounds a year. A conceſſion of this nature would have ſatisfied them; and I am ſure the requeſt was reaſonable enough. It would have beſtowed upon the Roman Catholic body no great ſhare of influence in the legiſlative power of this country; but, it would have proved to the Catholics, that there was a proſpect of their being, in proceſs of time, reſtored to the rights of citizens.

If

* See the Reſolutions of the Catholic Committee on the 4th of February laſt.

If the Legiſlature once reſolves on receiving the Roman Cathblics into the Conſtitution, it is in their power, and it will be a very eaſy matter to lay, at firſt, ſuch reſtrictions on the Catholics, that the gradual, and progreſſive emancipation of theſe their fellow-ſubjects ſhall be accompliſhed with the moſt perfect ſecurity to Proteſtant intereſts. It is not for me to point out thoſe reſtrictions of precaution, which prudence might require; I acknowledge I am not competent to treat the ſubject. There is one meaſure however, which I ſhall make free to mention, becauſe it could never be attended with any inconvenience, and that is the following: every Roman Catholic might be invited to take a ſolemn and public oath, that he never will, by writing, by public diſcourſe, or by any other means whatſoever, propagate, or communicate any principles, or poſitions, tending to deprive the Proteſtants of any, even the leaſt rights of freemen; on the contrary, they might by the ſame oath engage themſelves, at all times to maintain and defend by every means in their power, all the rights of their Proteſtant brethren, in the ſame manner as they would ſupport their own. As an additional bulwark of ſecurity, a law might be enacted by the Legiſlature, declaring it a crime of treaſon againſt the State, for any Roman Catholic, or any other perſon whatſoever, to adopt any principle, or meaſure,

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tending to deprive the Proteſtants of any rights of freemen: by the ſame law, ſevere puniſhments might be provided againſt ſuch, who ſhould dare to violate this ſtatute. When we weigh theſe powerful means of ſecurity, and when we conſider that the admiſſion of the Roman Catholics to the full rights of the Conſtitution, is not to be an inſtantaneous meaſure, but to be effected by gradual, and progreſſive conceſſions, I ſee nothing that Proteſtants can poſſibly fear.

Another objection urged againſt the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, is, that Proteſtantiſm would be expoſed to the danger of no longer being the eſtabliſhed religion of Ireland.——It would be eaſy to ſhow, that wherever all perſuaſions of chriſtianity are equally tolerated, and indiſcriminately admitted to every right and dignity of the State, there, no eſtabliſhed church in reality exiſts; or at leaſt, the term then can only ſignify, that the clergy of ſuch a particular church receive their emoluments from the State. The difficulty therefore reſpecting an eſtabliſhed church, is entirely reduced to the conſideration of a *church eſtabliſhment*, that is to ſay, the revenues, enjoyed by the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church. Now, in regard to this point, I am very certain the Catholics would conduct themſelves exactly in the ſame manner as the Preſbyterians have

have done ſince the repeal of the teſt act in this kingdom; I mean they would moſt willingly agree to leave the Proteſtant clergy in quiet poſſeſſion of their livings. But, in order fully to remove all doubts and fears on this head, the following means might be adopted. Whenever the ſyſtem of emancipation ſhall be ſo far advanced, that members of the Catholic body ſhall be received into the Legiſlature, an oath might be framed, which every Catholic member ſhould be obliged to take before his admiſſion; a clauſe of this oath might be, that he (the Catholic member) never would take a part in any debate, or give any vote, where the temporalities of the Proteſtant clergy were concerned, but would leave all theſe matters to be diſcuſſed, and finally ſettled by the Proteſtant part of the Houſe. This, I imagine, would be a ſufficient ſecurity for the church eſtabliſhment; ſhould it not be deemed adequate, I am convinced the Catholics would be very ready to give any other that might be judged neceſſary.

As I am now ſpeaking of church eſtabliſhments, I cannot help making an obſervation on the ſubject. In countries, ſituated as England, and Ireland are, in regard to ſo many different religious intereſts, I cannot comprehend what real utility can ariſe from a church eſtabliſhment, either to Religion, or the State. It appears to

me, it would greatly promote the advantages of religion, and thoſe of the people, if each perſuaſion were to ſupport the eſtabliſhment of their own particular worſhip. Theſe are my ideas, if they are erroneous, I am open to conviction. There is one point, however, on which my ſentiments are decided, which is, that if at any future period, a new plan ſhould be introduced for the ſupport of the Clergy, common humanity, and juſtice would require, that the *actual* poſſeſſors of church livings ſhould not be deprived of any part of their revenues. It is inhuman to reduce a perſon, who has been habituated to a life of opulence, ſplendor and dignity, to a ſtate of bare mediocrity: it is a cruel mockery to tell a perſon of this deſcription, that 200*l.* or 300*l.* *per ann.* is quite ſufficient to ſupply every reaſonable want.

The reader will readily excuſe this ſhort digreſſion.——In regard to religious concerns, only one point more remains, on which it may be proper to ſay a word—Poſſibly ſome Proteſtants may apprehend, that in proceſs of time, Catholics may be deſirous of introducing into this kingdom, all that public pomp of religion, which is ſtill to be found in ſome Catholic countries. I will take upon myſelf to aſſert, that the Roman Catholics would be the firſt to oppoſe the introduction of any practices of religion,

religion, that might be disagreeable to the eyes of their Protestant brethern.

Another popular objection urged against the restoration of the Roman Catholic Body to their rights, is, that they might hereafter be led to lay claim to the possessions of their ancestors. How such an extravagant notion respecting Catholics, should be seriously entertained by any sensible man, is what I cannot conceive. This subject has been most ably treated by Mr. Todd Jones; he has proved to demonstrative evidence, that a measure of this nature is totally impracticable. If any doubt still exists in the minds of Protestants, let them speak out, let them propose an oath, couched in the clearest and strongest terms, to be taken by every Roman Catholic: experience will then convince them that we are incapable of forming such chimerical pretensions.

But methinks, I hear it answered, that Papists are not bound by oaths; that no confidence can be placed in their most sacred engagements. Were such assertions the language of malice, and affected ignorance, (and I fear this has sometimes been the case) I would look down on the vile authors of such calumny with the most sovereign contempt, and would not demean myself by giving the least reply. But perhaps, there are still many upright, well-intentioned Protestants,

Proteſtants, whoſe minds having received, during the tender years of youth, very unfavourable impreſſions againſt Catholics, have not yet been able wholly to free themſelves from the force of prejudice: It is to men of this deſcription I now addreſs myſelf—I will then inform theſe my Proteſtant brethren, that the Roman Catholics conſider the obligation of an oath, made either to the State, or to any private individual, at leaſt as ſacred and inviolable, as any other perſuaſion of chriſtians. Let any Proteſtant conſult our Theologians, or if he has not the opportunity of doing this, let him peruſe any of our common books of ſpirituality, or the Catholic catechiſms that are put into the hands of children, and he will then ſoon perceive how unjuſt and unfounded thoſe imputations are, which are laid to the charge of Catholic doctrine.

Nothing more than a moment's reflection is requiſite to convince an impartial man, how very ſacred the engagement of an oath is held by every Roman Catholic. For, let me aſk, what is it has prevented the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and thoſe of her ſiſter kingdom, from enjoying all the rights which their fellow-ſubjects poſſeſs? It is the inviolable reſpect, which they pay to an atteſtation of the Supreme Being. Were it not for this, they might inſtantly take thoſe oaths preſcribed by our laws,

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paſs through a few other formalities, and then every poſt of honour, and emolument would be rendered equally acceſſible to them as to other ſubjects. But, ſo utterly unknown to Roman Catholics is any ſpiritual diſpenſing power in oaths betwixt man and man—in ſuch abhorrence do they hold thoſe principles of mental reſervation, equivocation, &c. which prejudice and ignorance have attributed to them, that ſhould any private Roman Catholic, be weak and ignorant enough to imagine, that by virtue of a future diſpenſation, or by any mental reſervation, he might for example, hold a ſeat in Parliament, experience would ſoon teach him, that he had committed a moſt fatal error. He would ſoon find that he muſt either ſacrifice the fruits of his perjury, or elſe ceaſe to be a member of the Catholic Communion. Without ſuch a ſacrifice, no Catholic clergyman could admit him to a participation of the Sacraments of our church. Theſe few obſervations I hope, will ſuffice to ſhew what our Doctrine is upon the nature of oaths.

We have ſtill one more objection to encounter,——It has been ſaid, that the Roman Catholics have not had the ſame advantages of a liberal education, as their fellow-ſubjects; and that conſequently they cannot be ſuppoſed to be yet qualified to receive the benefits of our Conſtitution.—The argument is in itſelf juſt,

juſt, but the conſequences drawn from it, have been puſhed to an incredible extreme. A conſiderable portion of the Catholics of Ireland have not received the advantage of education; but does it follow from thence that all the reſpectable, and enlightened Catholics of this kingdom, are to be confounded in one common maſs with the ignorant, and the unlettered? Does it follow that three millions of men are not to have a ſingle vote in the compoſition of the Legiſlature? The Roman Catholics do not wiſh that every forty ſhilling freeholder ſhould have a vote—Their only deſire is that, for the preſent, the right of elective franchiſe ſhould be reſtored, but with great reſtrictions. And undoubtedly we may be authorized to ſuppoſe that the information of a Proteſtant forty-ſhilling freeholder will not, generally ſpeaking, be more extenſive, than that of his Catholic neighbour, whoſe circumſtances in life are much more comfortable and flouriſhing.

I would willingly aſk thoſe gentlemen, who talk ſo much of education, what ſhare of polite literature, what knowledge of the Greek, and Latin languages, what proficiency in the learned ſciences, they imagine to be abſolutely requiſite to enable an honeſt farmer to give a vote at an election? Were a liberal education conſidered as a neceſſary qualification, I am afraid the number of our *actual* electors would be terribly reduced.

reduced. Let care be taken to exclude the loweſt orders of the community, and I will anſwer for it, it will be found the Roman Catholics have erudition, and wit enough, to diſcern the merits, and demerits of their repreſentatives.

I have ſeveral times amuſed myſelf with reflecting on the various ſenſations, which a peruſal of our late parliamentary Debates muſt occaſion in foreign countries.—Foreigners in general, do not entertain too elevated notions of the ſtate of literature in this kingdom.—But, what will their ideas now be, when they learn from our ſenators, that our iſland is ſtill in ſuch an uncivilized barbarous ſtate, that three fourths of its inhabitants are utterly incapable of being admitted to the rights of political ſociety! For my part, I ſhall not be aſtoniſhed to find in the next French Geography that is publiſhed, Ireland deſcribed—as a ſavage country, where the greateſt part of the inhabitants ſtill run wild, in a ſtate of unimproved nature.—But, on the other hand, as the French are a moſt good-natured people, it will not in the leaſt ſurpriſe me, if they run quite into an oppoſite extreme. They will, very poſſibly, begin to imagine, that in ſpeaking of the ſavage inhabitants of our iſland, our ſenators muſt certainly allude to wild bears, and boars, with which (for any thing a Frenchman knows) our

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foreſts may abound—And then, when they hear us talk of *opening ſchools*, the lively imagination of a Frenchman will inſtantly ſuggeſt to him, that in this wonderful age of improvements, and diſcoveries, we are undertaking to civilize the underſtandings of the brute and ſavage part of the creation.—It is true, that when that part of the Debates is read, which ſpeaks of admiſſion to the practice of the law, it will rather puzzle even a Frenchman's ingenuity, to conceive how a ſtupid, uncouth bear is to be made capable of pleading at the bar—However, ſuch is the great good-nature, politeneſs, and force of imagination of the French nation, that they will find ſome means or other of making even this trifling difficulty conſiſtent with the general ſyſtem.

But to be ſerious.—Were there queſtion of immediately receiving Roman Catholics as members of the Legiſlature, then indeed we ſhould not be ſurpriſed to hear diſcuſſions on their talents, and information; but ſome years muſt yet elapſe, before the minds of men will be ſufficiently prepared for this great event; in the interim, Catholics will profit by thoſe opportunities, which the enlightened benevolence of Parliament has granted them. Powerful, and noble motives will rouſe, and call forth into activity thoſe mental powers, which had ſo long lain dormant.

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Even at this time, many characters are to be found among the Roman Catholics of this kingdom, whoſe great talents, and extenſive information would be no diſhonor to any ſenate; and I truſt the period is not far diſtant, when an Iriſh Parliament will be able with entire ſecurity to Proteſtant intereſts, generouſly to call upon their Catholic fellow-ſubjects, to aſſiſt them by their counſels, in the divine work of promoting general welfare.

We have now examined, at ſome length, thoſe motives, which are principally urged againſt the emancipation of the Roman Catholic body.—We have evinced that no part of our religious principles is inimical to the government of this kingdom—We have endeavoured to ſhew that by a *progreſſive* conceſſion of rights, by having recourſe to certain temporary reſtrictions, and by employing thoſe other means of precaution, that the wiſdom of the Legiſlature may dictate, the Roman Catholics may be gradually received into the Conſtitution, with the moſt perfect ſecurity to the intereſts of our Proteſtant brethren, both in Church, and State.

The ſecurity of government is founded on a firm baſis, when it is ſupported by the affectionate attachment of all its inhabitants. But, on the other hand, weak is the policy of that

State, which is continually obliged to be on its guard againſt the diſcontents of a people, in whom the ſupreme power dares not repoſe confidence, even in the critical moment of danger. For my part, I would wiſh to ſee all the inhabitants of this iſland, ſo united by equal, and common intereſts, that their cauſe ſhould be inſeparably the ſame.—I would wiſh to ſee them all, ſo invariably fixed in their adherence to the Conſtitution of their country, that their loyalty ſhould remain firm, and unſhaken, though the fleets of France were once more to menace our coaſts, and come armed with a million copies of the Rights of Men, and a million Manifeſtos, ſimilar to that the National Aſſembly lately publiſhed.

It has been a ſubject of great complaint, that ſome Catholics have aſſociated themſelves to thoſe men, who are eſteemed ſeditious by the adminiſtration of this country. This, however, cannot be made a cauſe of accuſation againſt the Roman Catholic body. Proteſtants enjoy all the rights of citizens, and yet, ſome are by adminiſtration ſuppoſed to be ſeditious; what wonder then if among three millions of men, ſome individuals ſhould be implicated in the ſame ſuſpicion? The moſt perſuaſive arguments to deter a Proteſtant from deſiring a change in the government of this country, muſt be derived from the beauty, and excellency of

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our Conſtitution; but all this reaſoning can have no charm to convince a Catholic—It is a language to him wholly unintelligible—He beholds the advantages, but he is told that they are not for him. Why then ſhould men be ſurpriſed that Roman Catholics ſhould unite themſelves to thoſe, who generouſly hold out to them the delicious fruits of freedom? The deſire of liberty is innate—It is the nobleſt paſſion of the human mind.—To command us then to extirpate theſe wiſhes, is, to order us to *ceaſe* to be men.

I have now done.——Every expreſſion in the proſecution of this work, has been weighed with the moſt guarded and conſtant attention. I have not employed the offenſive weapons of ſatire and ridicule; neither have I had recourſe to the envenomed ſhafts of paſſionate declamation. But if unfortunately, any part of this performance ſhould give offence to any rank of men, I here entreat that the whole weight of their cenſures may fall upon *my* head: my intention of writing was not communicated even to one individual of my religion; ſurely then, I alone ſtand accountable for any errors I may inadvertently have been betrayed into.

I cordially love the Iriſh Roman Catholics, and I wiſhed to ſerve them by my humble labours,

labours—I ſincerely regard and eſteem all deſcriptions of citizens in this country, and therefore I cannot but indulge the pleaſing hope that the day will ſoon come, which ſhall know no political diſtinctions of religious perſuaſions, which ſhall behold Proteſtants and Catholics joined in the bonds of eternal union.—Then, ſhall the proſperity of Ireland be great, and her power reſpectable.—What ſtriking advantages has not this country already felt from the happy diſpoſitions of the age!—Go on then, Generous People, and ſuffer not yourſelves to be outdone by neighbouring States, in the noble, in the glorious conteſt of LIBERALITY and BENEVOLENCE.

QUERIES

QUERIES TO FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES,

WITH THEIR ANSWERS.

WHEN the Committee of the Engliſh Catholics waited on Mr. Pitt, he requeſted to be furniſhed with authentic evidence of the opinions of the Catholic Clergy, and the Catholic Univerſities abroad, " With reſpect " to the exiſtence and extent of the Pope's " diſpenſing power." Three queſtions were accordingly framed and ſent to the Univerſities of Paris, Louvain, Alcala, Doway, Salamanca, and Valladolid, for their opinions.

The reader will find annexed, the queſtions propoſed, and alſo the anſwers given by the Univerſities of Paris, Louvain, and Valladolid. The anſwers of the other Univerſities are not inſerted, becauſe I did not wiſh to ſwell this Pamphlet to an unneceſſary length; but ſhould any perſon be deſirous of peruſing them, I beg leave

leave to refer him to the Appendix, to the Addreſs of the Roman Catholic Committee, to their Proteſtant brethren, publiſhed in February laſt.

The queries and anſwers are as follow :

The Queries.

Has the Pope or Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, any civil authority, power, juriſdiction, or pre-eminence whatſoever, within the realm of England ?

2. Can the Pope, or Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, abſolve or diſpenſe with his Majeſty's ſubjects from their oath of allegiance, upon any pretext whatſoever ?

3. Is there any principle in the tenets of the Catholic Faith, by which Catholics are juſtified in not keeping faith with Heretics, or other perſons differing from them in religious opinions, in any tranſaction, either of a public or a private nature ?

Abſtract

Abſtract from the anſwer of the Sacred Faculty of Divinity of Paris to the above Queries.

AFTER an introduction according to the uſual forms of the univerſity, they anſwer the firſt query, by declaring:—

Neither the *Pope*, *nor the Cardinals*, *nor any body of men*, nor any other perſon of the Church of Rome hath any *civil authority*, *civil power*, *civil juriſdiction*, *or civil pre-eminence* whatſoever in *any* kingdom; and, conſequently, none in the kingdom of England, by reaſon or virtue of any authority, power, juriſdiction, or pre-eminence by divine inſtitution inherent in, or granted, or by any other means belonging to the Pope, or the Church of Rome. This doctrine the Sacred Faculty of Divinity of Paris has always held, and upon every occaſion maintained, and upon every occaſion has rigidly proſcribed the contrary doctrines from her ſchools.

Anſwer to the ſecond query.—Neither the *Pope*, *nor the Cardinals*, *nor any body of men*, nor any perſon of the Church of Rome, can, by virtue of the keys, abſolve or releaſe the ſubjects

jects of the King of England from their oath of allegiance.

This and the first query are so intimately connected, that the answer of the first immediately and naturally applies to the second, &c.

Answer to the third query.—There is no tenet in the Catholic Church, by which, Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, or those who differ from them in matters of religion. The tenet, that it is lawful to break faith with Heretics, is so repugnant to common honesty and the opinions of Catholics, that *there is nothing of which those who have defended the Catholic Faith against Protestants, have complained more heavily, than the malice and calumny of their adversaries in imputing this tenet to them*, &c. &c. &c.

Given at Paris, in the General Assembly of the Sorbonne, held on Thursday the 11th day before the calends of March, 1789.

Signed in due form.

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN.

THE Faculty of Divinity at Louvain, having been requeſted to give her opinion upon the queſtions above ſtated, does it with readineſs—*but ſtruck with aſtoniſhment that ſuch queſtions ſhould, at the end of this eighteenth century, be propoſed to any learned Body, by inhabitants of a kingdom that glories in the talents and diſcernment of its natives.* The Faculty being aſſembled for the above purpoſe, it is agreed with the unanimous aſſent of all voices to anſwer the firſt and ſecond queries abſolutely in the negative.

The faculty does not think it incumbent upon her in this place to enter upon the proofs of her opinion, or to ſhew how it is ſupported by paſſages in the Holy Scriptures, or the writings of antiquity. That has already been done by Boſſuet, De Marca, the two Barclays, Goldaſtus, the Pithæuſes, Argentre Widrington, and his Majeſty King James the Firſt, in his Diſſertation againſt Bellarmine and Du Perron, and by many others, &c. &c. &c.

The faculty then proceeds to declare that the ſovereign power of the ſtate is in nowiſe (not even indirectly as it is termed) ſubject to, or dependant upon, any other power; though it be a ſpiritual power, or even though it be inſtituted for eternal ſalvation, &c. &c.

That *no man nor any aſſembly of men*, however eminent in dignity and power, nor even the *whole body of the Catholic Church*, though aſſembled in general council, can upon any ground or pretence whatſoever, weaken the bond of union between the Sovereign and the People; ſtill leſs can they abſolve or free the ſubjects from their Oath of Allegiance.

Proceeding to the third queſtion, the ſaid Faculty of Divinity (in perfect wonder that ſuch a queſtion ſhould be propoſed to her) moſt poſitively and unequivocally anſwers, That there is not, and there never has been, among the Catholics, or in the doctrines of the Church of Rome, any law or principle which makes it lawful for Catholics to break their faith with Heretics, or others of a different perſuaſion from themſelves in matters of Religion, either in public or private concerns.

The Faculty declares the doctrine of the Catholics to be, that the Divine and Natural Law, which makes it a duty to keep faith and promiſes,

promiſes, is the ſame; and is neither ſhaken nor diminiſhed, if thoſe with whom the engagement is made, hold erroneous opinions in matters of religion, &c. &c.

Signed in due form on the 18th of November, 1788.

UNIVERSITY OF VALLADOLID.

TO the firſt queſtion it is anſwered—*That neither Pope, Cardinals, or even a General Council,* have any civil authority, power, juriſdiction or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, in the kingdom of Great-Britain; or over *any other kingdom or province* in which they poſſeſs no temporal dominion.

To the ſecond, it is anſwered—That neither Pope nor Cardinals, nor even a General Council, can abſolve the ſubjects of Great Britain from their Oaths of Allegiance, or diſpenſe with their obligation.

To

To the third, it is anſwered—That the obligation of keeping faith is grounded on the law of nature, which binds all men equally, without reſpect to their religious opinions; and with regard to Catholics, it is ſtill more cogent, as it is confirmed by the principles of their religion.

Signed in the uſual form,
February 17, 1789.

FINIS.